

CSB IAS ACADEMY

THE ROAD MAP TO MUSSOORIE...

PRELIMS EDGE – 2025 – 08/11/2024

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

Context: NITI Aayog CEO recently said that India should be a part of RCEP and CPTPP.

RCEP: Nations signed up to world's largest free trade deal



About RCEP:

- The RCEP is a significant economic agreement between **ASEAN members and Free Trade Agreement (FTA) partners**.
- RCEP is the **world's largest trading bloc**.
- It is designed to promote economic integration, trade liberalization, and cooperation among member nations.
- The RCEP negotiations began in 2012.
- It was officially signed in **November 2020**, marking a major milestone in regional trade.
- It was entered into force on January 1, 2022.

Member Countries:

15 member countries: China, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Australia, and ASEAN nations (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam).

Coverage Areas:

- The RCEP negotiation includes: trade in goods, trade in services, investment, economic and technical cooperation, intellectual property, competition, dispute settlement, e-commerce, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and other issues.

Objectives of RCEP:

- Facilitate trade and investment among member nations.
- Reduce or eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade.
- Enhance economic cooperation and regional supply chains.

Benefits of RCEP:

- Promotes economic growth and regional stability.
- Streamlines trade procedures and regulations.
- Encourages foreign investment.
- Enhances competitiveness and innovation.

Trade Volume:

- RCEP member nations represent **over 30% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**.
- The trading bloc covers about **one-third of the world's population**.
- It has the potential to significantly impact global trade.

India and RCEP:

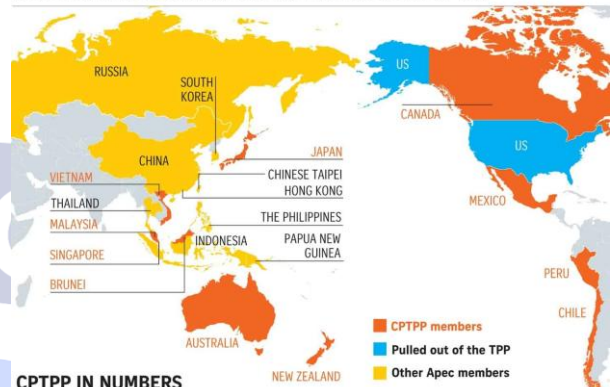
- India was a founding member of the RCEP. In 2019, India decided to withdraw from the RCEP negotiations.
- India's decision to exit the RCEP was based on concerns about the impact on its domestic economy.
- Primary concerns included fears of an influx of Chinese goods into the Indian market, affecting local industries.
- Issues related to mobility in services and reservations from the agriculture sector and small businesses were contributing factors.

Source: India should be part of RCEP, CPTPP: NITI Aayog CEO B.V.R Subrahmanyam (The Hindu)

- CPTPP removes 99% of tariffs on goods and services.

TPP-11 to move forward on trade deal

The 11 remaining members of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), all of them in Apec, will push ahead on their free trade deal without the United States. They have renamed it the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for the TPP (CPTPP).



CPTPP IN NUMBERS



SUNDAY TIMES GRAPHICS

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)

Context: NITI Aayog CEO recently said that India should be a part of RCEP and CPTPP.

About CPTPP:

- The CPTPP is a **Free trade agreement (FTA)** between **Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, New Zealand, Singapore and Vietnam.**
- The CPTPP was signed by the **11 countries** on 8 March 2018 in Santiago, Chile.
- Currently, the membership is about to be expanded to **12** with the formal addition of the **United Kingdom** planned on December 15, 2024.

Background:

- In 2005, a trade agreement between a small group of **Pacific Rim countries** comprising Brunei, Chile, New Zealand, and Singapore led to the formation of **Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP)** consisting of 12 nation-states.
- After the **withdrawal of the US**, the remaining eleven signatories, known as the **TPP-11**, continued talks and their efforts led to the formation of CPTPP.

Significance:

- All the member countries have agreed to **cut down on wildlife trafficking.**
- It prevents environmental abuses, such as **unsustainable logging and fishing.** Countries that don't comply will face trade penalties.
- **All 11 countries of CPTPP** are also members of the **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).**
 - **UK is not a member of APEC.**

Source: India should be part of RCEP, CPTPP: NITI Aayog CEO B.V.R Subrahmanyam (The Hindu)

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)

Context: The Supreme Court recently clarified that the directive to remove caste column from undertrials' register in jails would not impede data collection by NCRB.

About NCRB:

- It was established in 1986 to act as a repository of information on crime and criminals.
- It comes under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- It was set up based on the recommendations of the Tandon Committee, the National Police Commission (1977-1981) and the Task Force of the Home Ministry.
- It is responsible for collecting and analyzing crime data as well as serving as a repository of such information to aid investigators in tracing crimes and criminals.
- Headquarters: New Delhi



- The NCRB has also launched **CyTrain**, a portal for online training of different stakeholders in cybercrime investigations and prosecution.
- The **Central Finger Print Bureau** under the NCRB is a national repository of all fingerprints in the country.
- NCRB also **compiles and publishes National Crime Statistics** i.e. Crime in India, Accidental Deaths & Suicides, and also Prison Statistics.
- NCRB also assists various States in capacity building in the areas of Information Technology, CCTNS, Finger Prints, Network security, and Digital Forensics through its training centers in Delhi and Kolkata.

Source: SC order will not hinder NCRB data collection (The Hindu)

Corporate Social Responsibility

Context: CSR potential in the agriculture sector has been discussed in relation to various factors that hinder its growth.

Projects/Initiatives under NCRB:

- In 2009, the NCRB was entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring, coordinating, and implementing the **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and System (CCTNS)** project.
 - This project connects about 15,000 police stations and 6,000 high offices in the country.
- In 2017, the NCRB launched the **National Digital Police Portal**, which allows police officers to look for a criminal or suspect on the CCTNS database and gives citizens with services such as online complaint filing, etc.
- The Bureau has also been entrusted to maintain the **National Database of Sexual Offenders (NDSO)** and share it with the States/UTs on a regular basis.
- NCRB has also been designated as the **Central Nodal Agency** to manage the technical and operational functions of the **'Online Cyber-Crime Reporting Portal'** through which any citizen can lodge a complaint or upload a video clip as evidence of crime related to child pornography, rape/gang rape.



About Corporate Social Responsibility:

- 'Corporate Social Responsibility' in general can refer to a **corporate initiative to assess and take responsibility for the company's effects on the environment and impact on social welfare.**
- In India, the concept of CSR is governed by **Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013.**

- India is the **first country in the world to mandate CSR spending** along with a framework to identify potential CSR activities.
- The CSR provisions within the Act is **applicable to companies with an annual turnover of 1,000 crore and more**, or a **net worth of Rs. 500 crore** and more, or a **net profit of Rs. 5 crore** and more.
- The Act requires companies to set up a **CSR committee** which shall recommend a Corporate Social Responsibility Policy to the Board of Directors and also monitor the same from time to time.
- The Act encourages companies to spend **2% of their average net profit in the previous three years** on CSR activities.
- The indicative activities, which can be undertaken by a company under CSR, have been specified under **Schedule VII of the Act**.
- The activities include:
 - Eradicating extreme hunger and poverty,
 - Promotion of education, gender equality and empowering women,
 - Combating Human Immunodeficiency Virus, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and other diseases,
 - Ensuring environmental sustainability;
 - Contribution to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund or any other fund set up by the Central Government for socio-economic development and relief and funds for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, other backward classes, minorities and women etc.

Source: Are CSR contributions to agriculture properly tracked? (The Hindu)

Chhath Puja

Context: Thousands of devotees offered prayers on the banks of the

Yamuna on the occasion of Chhath Puja.



About Chhath Puja:

- It is an important **Hindu festival** celebrated in states like **Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and West Bengal**.
- This festival is dedicated to **God Surya** and his sister **Shashti Devi**, often referred to as **Chhathi Maiya**, and it involves religious rituals.
- The most unique feature of this Chhath Puja is that there is **no Murti Pujan or idol worship**, unlike most of the festivals of the Hindu religion.
- The festival is celebrated between the months of October and November.
- The Chhath festival begins as the Diwali festival ends.
- It is celebrated for **four consecutive days** and celebrated with great reverence and dedication.
- The first day of the Chhath Puja includes **taking a dip in the holy river/any water body**.
 - People also take the Ganges water to their homes to perform special offerings and rituals. Houses are thoroughly cleaned on this day.
- The second day of Chhath, also known as **Kharna**, involves devotees observing a **day-long fast**, which is broken in the late evening after performing the worship of Mother Earth.
 - The offerings to God include rice pudding (kheer) and fruits, which is distributed among family members and friends.

- The third day of Chhath goes into the **preparation of the prasad** (offerings) for the evening offerings, also known as **Sanjhiya Arghya**.
 - In the evening, large numbers of devotees gather on the banks of rivers and make offerings (Arghya) to the setting sun.
 - The night of the third day witnesses a colorful event known as **Kosi**.
 - A canopy is made from sugarcane sticks, and lighted earthen lamps are placed inside the canopy along with baskets filled with prasad.
- On the fourth and final day of Chhath, family members and friends go to the banks of rivers before sunrise and make offerings (Arghya) to the rising sun.
- After this ritual, devotees break their fast and distribute Prasad to neighbors and relatives.

Source: *Lifeline in distress (The Hindu)*

Terms in News

Ozempic

- Ozempic is a brand name for the generic drug **semaglutide**, which is FDA-approved to treat **Type-2 Diabetes** by controlling blood sugar levels.
- It is administered **by injection or can be taken orally**.
- Ozempic works by mimicking the effects of a hormone called **GLP-1**, which is naturally produced in the body.
 - GLP1 helps to regulate blood sugar levels by stimulating the release of insulin, slowing down the release of glucose from the liver.
- **Concern:** side effects of the causes facial ageing, skin sagging.
- This drug has recently been in the news due to its **weight loss properties** and apparent rampant misuse by celebrities to remain thin.

Practice Questions

Q1. With reference to Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), consider the following statements:

1. The members of RCEP together account for one third of global GDP.
2. India is a founding member and active participant in the RCEP.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q2. How many of the following countries are members of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership?

1. USA
2. Chile
3. Argentina
4. Indonesia

Choose the correct answer:

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

Q3. With reference to the National Crime Records Bureau, consider the following statements:

1. It acts as a repository of information on crime and criminals.
2. It comes under the Ministry of Law and Justice.
3. It has the responsibility of coordinating and monitoring the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and System (CCTNS).

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Q4. With reference to Corporate Social Responsibility in India, consider the following statements:

1. India is the first country in the world to mandate CSR spending by law.
2. Companies are required to spend 5% of their average net profit in the previous three years on CSR activities.

Which of the given statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q5. Ozempic, a term recently seen in news, refers to which of the following:

- (a) AI-powered medical imaging device for cancer detection
- (b) A breakthrough vaccine for Malaria
- (c) A drug for Type-2 diabetes treatment
- (d) A high-protein diet supplement for weight loss

Answers:

1. (a)
2. (a)
3. (b)
4. (a)
5. (c)